



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOMELAND SECURITY ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY  
PROGRAM**



In order to be eligible for FY 2004 Federal Homeland Security funding, the Office of Domestic Preparedness required that each state and territory complete and submit a comprehensive assessment of their emergency response capabilities, as well as develop a strategy to enhance those capabilities. This necessitated the cooperation of municipal jurisdictions, their public safety assets, and multiple state agencies. For the purpose of data collection and management, the Division of Homeland Security designated Connecticut's 169 municipalities and two Native American Tribal Nations as local jurisdictions. An assessment of risks, vulnerabilities, capabilities, and needs was required of each jurisdiction. The Division of Homeland Security was designated the State Administrative Agency to coordinate the preparation and submission of the State Homeland Security Assessment and Strategy Program.

Utilizing the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP), the Division of Homeland Security sponsored five (5) one-day training sessions, in August 2003, for municipal CEOs, police chiefs, fire chiefs and emergency management officials, informing them of the requirements of the assessment program. Due to increased interest in the program and conflicts that prevented some jurisdictions from attending the initial training, four additional training sessions were scheduled in September.

In addition to the formal training sessions, Division of Homeland Security staff provided on-site training to several municipalities that were unable to attend the ODP instruction. The staff served as the principal liaisons with the local jurisdictions, interpreting the assessment handbooks, providing procedural guidance, and directing users to the technical assistance hotline. Periodically, assessment news, technical advisories, interpretations and procedural up-dates were distributed to jurisdiction administrators via e-mail.

Assessments were to be completed on-line, utilizing a secured data collection tool. However, technical problems with the website impeded the ability of the municipalities to enter their information in a timely or convenient fashion. Consequently, the initial deadline was extended and technical assistance, in the form of data entry, was provided. When the deadline for submission of the State strategy was extended until January 31, 2004, local jurisdictions were granted additional time to complete their assessments. Division of Homeland Security staff continued to provide instruction and guidance to a number of smaller communities, in an effort to achieve greater participation and compliance.

While coordinating the completion and submission of the municipal assessments, Efforts were undertaken to prepare the strategy. The state's prior submission

was reviewed and evaluated by staff from the Office of Emergency Management and the Division of Homeland Security. Specific attention was focused on the goals and objectives of that strategy. Utilizing the initial plan as a model, new goals and objectives were formulated to sustain the advancement of the state's capacity to respond to and recover from a mass casualty incident. Additionally, goals addressing terrorism prevention were proposed in order to more thoroughly protect the state's assets and its citizens. A working group, consisting of representatives of various state agencies, state Police Chiefs and Fire Chiefs associations, the emergency medical care community, the regional government planning organizations, and others, was assembled to assist in the coordination and development of the state assessment and strategy.

Connecticut's State Homeland Assessment and Strategy was submitted to the Office of Domestic Preparedness on January 27, 2004. One hundred fifty (150) of the 171 jurisdictions participated in the program. While the Division of Homeland Security had hoped for full participation, those 150 municipalities represented 96% of Connecticut's total population. Of the fifty-six (56) strategies submitted to the Office of Domestic Preparedness, Connecticut's was one of only nineteen (19) that was approved, without conditions. Twenty-three (23) were conditionally approved, while twelve (12) were returned for correction.